



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

# H1N1 (Swine Flu)

## What You Need to Know

### The H1N1 (swine flu) outbreak is now considered a pandemic

An influenza—or flu—pandemic is an outbreak of a new type of flu virus that spreads rapidly from one country to another. A pandemic begins when the new flu virus is easily passed from person to person.

#### To avoid spreading the flu:

- Wash your hands often.
- Cover your cough and sneeze.
- Stay home if you're sick.
- Get a flu shot when available.

As you prepare for the current H1N1 (swine flu), remember:

- It may be difficult to get medical care.
- Supplies and services may be limited.
- You may be asked to stay away from others.
- Medicines for flu symptoms may be in short supply.
- Travel may be difficult.
- The pandemic may last a long time.

### About seasonal and H1N1 flu shots

- Get your seasonal flu shot. (It won't be effective against H1N1 but will help you stay healthy during flu season.)
- Watch for information about when H1N1 vaccine is available in your community and who should get it. Get vaccinated when you can.

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### Learn more

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Washington State Department of Health — [www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/](http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) — [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)

World Health Organization (WHO) — [www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/)

Local public health agencies in Washington State — [www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/)

Questions? E-mail: [prepare@doh.wa.gov](mailto:prepare@doh.wa.gov)

# Prepare for H1N1 (swine flu)

## In your community

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### Know your neighbors

- Talk with family, friends, and neighbors to make sure everyone is prepared.

### Know school policies

- For more school information, visit the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Web site at: [www.k12.wa.us/healthservices/h1n1flu.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/healthservices/h1n1flu.aspx)

## At work

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**Be ready** for the possibility that you may not be able to go to work.

**Know your workplace's policies** concerning sick leave, absences, and telecommuting.

**Encourage planning.** Every business, organization, and agency should have a plan for

making sure essential work will get done if large numbers of employees are absent over many months.

**Explore ways to get your work done** that reduce personal contact. For example, increase use of e-mails or phone conferences.

## At home

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### Make household and family emergency plans

- Agree on a point of contact where all family members can check in if you are separated during an emergency.
- Decide who will take care of children if schools are closed.
- Plan to limit the number of trips you take to shop or to run errands. Also, remember public transportation routes and times may be limited.
- Think about how you would care for people in your family who have disabilities if support services are not available.
- Be prepared to get by for at least a week on what you have at home. Stores may not be open or may have limited supplies.

### Keep these items in your home

- Enough food and water per person for a week or more.
- Medications—At least a week's supply of those you take regularly.
- Items to relieve flu symptoms—Medicines such as Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen for fever, cold packs, blankets, extra water, and fruit juice.
- Items for personal comfort—Soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and toilet paper.
- Activities for yourself and your children.
- Cash.
- Pet supplies.
- Cell phone or regular phone with a cord—Cordless phones won't work if the power is out.
- Large trash bags.

## Protect your health

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### Prevent the spread of germs

The flu virus is spread from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches things that others use. Do these simple, effective things to help protect yourself and others:

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough into your sleeve.
- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water.
- **Don't touch** your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- **Stay home** when you're sick or have flu symptoms.

### Home care

#### Learn basic care-giving.

Know how to care for someone with a fever, body aches, and lung congestion.

#### Learn to recognize and treat dehydration.

Watch for weakness, fainting, dry mouth, dark concentrated urine, low blood pressure, or a fast pulse when lying or sitting down. To prevent dehydration, it is very important for a person with the flu to drink a lot of water—up to 12 glasses a day.

## More information about H1N1 (swine flu)

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### Washington State Department of Health

[www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/](http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/)

### Questions?

E-mail: [prepare@doh.wa.gov](mailto:prepare@doh.wa.gov)